

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Chairman, 3 months ago I went with the Secretary of Defense to Aviano where, as the first order of business, we were to be briefed by Brigadier General Dan Leaf, the commander of our air forces there. General Leaf was there to meet us on the runway early that morning even though the night before he had flown a mission himself.

He briefed us with confidence, professional pride. And without bluster, he told us that his success to date was due more to the discipline and perfection with which his men had executed their mission, and, yes, their morale, because they believed in what they were doing; and not in the ineffectiveness of our adversary because our adversary was formidable. He did not promise us any quick results, but he did not shrink from the mission, and he left us believing the mission would be accomplished.

Well, Mr. Chairman, General Leaf and his troops did not disappoint us. They did what we asked them to do. They demonstrated the prowess of the United States Air Force, once again on a level with the Persian Gulf, and let me say I am proud to represent those troops because some of them came from my district, from Shaw Air Force Base. They did their job, they served us well, they made us proud, and I am here in the well of the House to commend them.

They must wonder, as many of us do, why this bill cut short what they have accomplished. The bill itself, the text of the bill, precludes further funding for peacekeeping or combat operations next year, and not satisfied with that, the majority has made in order three more amendments which pound the same issue: no money for military operations of any kind. I suppose that means no signal intelligence to see what Milosevic is up to, no overhead satellites, no CIA, no search and rescue.

What in the world are we doing considering amendments like this?

I know peacekeeping is onerous and expensive, I know our forces are stretched out around the globe, but I cannot believe that we are considering amendments like this at this time. We should be savoring our victory. We should voice vote up the Skelton amendment, remove the ban on funding, tell the President, sure, send us a supplemental next year to pay for the peacekeeping. But we should savor our victory, defeat these other amendments and see that our victory is consummated by a successful peacekeeping operation.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER).

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment my friends, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the distinguished chairman of the

full committee for their fine work here, and I would like to say that the agreed-to settlement yesterday is, I believe, good news for Kosovo, good news for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and good news for the American people and for our forces who have fought with tremendous professionalism and valor in dealing with what is obviously a very, very tough situation.

We all know that NATO's campaign had a specific goal. It was about bringing a political settlement that could be supported by both the Kosovar Albanians as well as the Serbs. At the same time, America's ultimate goal I believe must be a future which ensures that our troops will not be needed in Kosovo or, for that matter, anywhere else in the region. That is a very important goal that we need to pursue.

I frankly am troubled if we look at the historic pattern that we have seen in Yugoslavia, in the entire region, which has required that presence, but I think that we need to do everything that we can to continue to pursue that ultimate goal.

Now, having said those things, Mr. Chairman, I think it is very important for us to realize that we need to proceed with an important and rigorous debate on exactly what U.S. national interests are around the world; and as we look at the challenge of having deployed troops in many parts of the world beyond the Balkans, we need to decide what it is that we want to pursue, what our priorities as a Nation are, and I hope that in the not too distant future we will be able to proceed with that.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER).

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Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, the House will decide today not whether or not we will pursue the war, because the war is over and the settlement has been signed and the United States and NATO have prevailed. The question before the House today is whether, after winning the war, will we lose the peace?

In this bill there is language that would cut off all funding for the peacekeeping operations 3½ months from now. It is my view that we must send a very clear signal to the world community and to President Milosevic that we intend to keep the peace; that when the world community stood united, when our NATO allies stood united, when our forces prevailed in the 78 days of the bombing campaign, that this House of Representatives also will stand united in supporting those troops and supporting that peacekeeping effort.

There is no question that we all believe in a strong military and we all believe that the supplemental appropriation, the emergency appropriation that we passed, was important to funding adequately the military. But to hide

behind that smokescreen and say that we will oppose the Skelton amendment and keep the language in the bill that cuts off funding 3½ months from now, just because we want to try to get another emergency appropriations bill passed sometime in the future, is, in my judgment, a wrong approach to a very serious issue.

It is my hope that this House will support the Skelton amendment, to tell the world community that we intend to do our part, and reject the Fowler amendment, which was the subject of legislation we debated back on March 11 before the conflict began, when this House agreed to authorize forces of the United States to participate in a NATO peacekeeping operation. In that debate I offered the amendment that would restrict our participation to 15 percent.

We need to continue on that course today, and we need to adopt the Skelton amendment.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the esteemed ranking member and anybody else who wants to speak on this, we have heard a number of statements about how much you love the troops. I do not have any influence with the President. The President is sending budgets down that do not pay for ammunition, do not give adequate pay to our troops, keep them on food stamps, do not give them spare parts and do not give them planes new enough to avoid a 55 crash a year crash rate. We all know what we are trying to do. We are trying to keep our money in the ammunition coffers so we do not spend that on other things and have empty ammunition coffers when the next war comes around.

I want to ask the gentleman, will the gentleman work to get the \$13 billion ammunition shortage plugged up to where it is at parity with what we need to fight the two wars?

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUNTER. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, absolutely.

Mr. HUNTER. Will the gentleman make a pitch to the President to do that?

Mr. SKELTON. Absolutely.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I will work with the gentleman over the next couple of weeks, and I hope all the other leaders and Members who have spoken on the Democrat side will use their influence to get this funding executed.

Mr. SKELTON. If the gentleman will yield further, the gentleman will recall that I put together just a few short years ago a military budget calling for an increase in three successive years. I know full well and the gentleman knows full well that we need additional funding for the military. We made substantial gains this year. I am very pleased with this bill.